



Lower Zambezi

Catch & Release Initiative

GUIDELINES

Photographing fish

PHOTOGRAPHING FISH BEFORE RELEASE

Most catch-and-release anglers will still want to keep a memento of their more memorable catches before releasing it. The best way to do this is by taking a photograph. Photographs can also be important for positive identification of species that may not be easy to identify in the field. However, photography does entail further handling of fish and increases the time they spend outside of the water, which can affect the fish's post-release survival. This sheet gives some basic guidelines on handling fish for photographing that can help ensure the best chance of the fish surviving after its release.

Best Practice for photographing a fish

Be prepared

- Decide early if you are going to photograph the fish.
- Make sure the camera is ready and easily accessible

Be supportive

- Lift the fish horizontally, supporting its weight from below.
- If you are using a lip-gripper (e.g. Boga) DO NOT lift it vertically by the jaw alone.

Keep it horizontal

- Photograph the fish while supporting it gently in a horizontal position.
- Never suspend the fish vertically.
- Holding the fish horizontally is less damaging to the fish, and also makes for a better photo than a fish hanging from its jaw.

Get a grip

- Make sure you have a firm grip on the fish. Don't drop it!
- Lip-grippers are useful for holding difficult species like tigerfish, but should only be used with support for the rest of the body.
- DO NOT hold the fish by placing your fingers in the gills or eye sockets

Make it snappy

- Minimise the time that the fish spends out of the water.
- Take a few photos quickly before releasing the fish gently back into the water.



Fishing guide's tip

Every second of a fish spends out of the water significantly increases the time it takes to recover time, affecting post release survival

Rather than boating the fish immediately and then getting the camera ready, keep the fish in the water, holding it with a lip-gripping device (Boga) until you are ready to take the photo at which point you can remove it from the water

(Alan Bonello, Sausage Tree Camp)



This fish is properly supported from below in a way that best displays the fish but does not place strain on the jaw, spine and internal organs.

Respect • Record • Release

For more information on how you can participate in fish conservation on the Lower Zambezi visit www.wildtracks-zambia.com/index.php/LZCRI

RELATED MATERIAL

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